

VJO Initiative

“The purpose of the VJO initiative is to avoid unnecessary criminalization of mental illness and extended incarceration among Veterans by ensuring that eligible Veterans in contact with the criminal justice system have access to Veterans Health Administration (VHA) mental health and substance services.”

Source: Department of Veterans Affairs, April 30, 2009. Under Secretary for Health's Information Letter.



The Veterans Justice Outreach Program can accept referrals from a Veteran, a Veteran's family, the community, the justice system, and VA staff.

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Helpful Websites and Numbers

VJO Initiative website:
<http://www1.va.gov/HOMELESS/VJO.asp>

Veterans Crisis Line
1-800-273-TALK (8255)

National Homeless Hotline
1-877-424-3838

VA Regional Office
1-800-827-1000

Military Personnel Records
<http://vetrecs.archives.gov>



VETERANS JUSTICE OUTREACH PROGRAM



Health Care for Homeless Veterans
Program (HCHV)
Day Treatment Center
1000 S. Main Street
Little Rock, AR 72202
(501) 244-1900
Fax: (501) 244-1795

Homelessness

The VJO Program is an outreach initiative designed to provide legally involved Veterans with linkages to VA and community resources addressing clinical needs and fostering stability. A justice involved Veteran is any Veteran who has contact with the Judicial System, Law Enforcement or the Jail System.

The CAVHS Health Care for Homeless Veterans Program is one of three nationally recognized Centers of Excellence in the care and treatment of Veterans without homes. The Center provides recovery focused Veteran centered care through a wide variety of specialized services. **Services at the CAVHS Day Treatment Center may include:**

- » Clinical Assessments
- » Case Management
- » Individualized Service Plans
- » Crisis Intervention
- » Day Treatment Groups
- » Residential Treatment
- » Permanent Housing
- » Employment Assistance
- » Benefits Linkage
- » Referrals for other VA Health Care Services

VJO Specialist CANNOT:

- » Guarantee program acceptance
- » Perform forensic psychiatric/psychological evaluations for the court
- » Accept custody
- » Write lengthy court reports or complete diversion paperwork
- » Decide criminal justice criteria for Veteran Court participation or decide who gains admission to specialty treatment courts
- » Act as lawyers or provide legal representation

Focus Areas

Courts and Attorneys

The Veterans Justice Outreach program provides education about Veterans issues to local justice system partners including but not limited to: PTSD, Traumatic Brain Injuries, substance abuse, and mental health issues. Veterans Treatment Courts are increasingly prevalent as they address Veterans legal concerns while supporting the VA's initiative to avoid unnecessary criminalization and extended incarceration of Veterans by ensuring justice involved Veterans get needed care. With Veteran consent, the VJO may function as a court team member and communicate VA treatment attendance and progress.

Law Enforcement

To educate local law enforcement on Veterans' issues, available resources and services, and the utilization of crisis intervention and de-escalation among Veterans. The VJO also serves to collaborate with and train VA Police on Veteran-specific issues.

Jails

To develop relationships with jails to ensure timely identification and assessment of incarcerated Veterans.

Veterans Legal Assistance Program

Assistance with non-criminal, civil issues.

Eligibility and Services Available

Upon request of the Veteran, the VJO can assist in establishing eligibility for VA services. This often includes interfacing with VA eligibility/admissions offices. The VJO may assist the Veteran with access to documents which may be required in determining eligibility. VA eligibility/admissions offices at the local VA determine eligibility.

Available health care services may include:

- » Hospital and Outpatient Medical Care
- » Domiciliary and Nursing Home
- » Sexual Trauma Counseling
- » Specialized Health Care for Women Veterans
- » Homeless Programs
- » Readjustment Counseling
- » Mental Health Services, including: Alcohol and Drug Treatment, Work Therapy, Anger Management, and PTSD Treatment.

Veterans are not eligible for health care services while jailed or incarcerated, but can receive outreach services.